

What more could a man ask for? by tigermo09

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Summary: Short drabble in answer to my own prompt: What would happen if Hopper had escaped with Joyce in Battle for Starcourt.

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What More Could a Man Ask For?

Just a little mind candy for my own prompt: What if Hopper had escaped with Joyce in The Battle of Starcourt?

Minor spoilers for season 3.

Disclaimer: I do not own Stranger Things or its characters.

The Byers House

Friday, October 25th, 1985

Three Months After The Battle of Starcourt

"Joyce! Have you seen my badge?" Hopper yelled to his girlfriend.

"I think you left it on the hamper in the bathroom." Joyce answered from the kitchen.

He flipped the light switch in the bathroom and saw his badge lying on the hamper, just as Joyce had said. "Found it!"

Hopper emerged from the hallway as he pinned the sheriff's badge on and walked up behind Joyce at the stove. "Morning," he murmured as he quickly pecked Joyce on the lips as she turned around.

He opened the refrigerator and poured himself a glass of orange juice. El and Will were already seated at the table. El was digging into an Eggo with fresh, cut strawberries, while Will finished up some homework.

Hopper joined them at the table. As he seated himself, Joyce brought over some scrambled eggs for him and Will.

"Hey kids," Hopper started and shoved some eggs in his mouth.

El and Will looked towards him expectantly. "Since Halloween is next week, I was thinking that maybe we should go to the corn maze

tonight after I get off work. Whatdaya say?"

El looked at Hopper and then at Joyce, who had joined them at the table. "I was planning on going out with Mike. He wants to see that new movie Better Off Dead."

Hopper pointed his fork at El. "You've seen Mike every night this week, El. Would it kill you to spend one night with us?" El was now well versed in all moods associated with Hopper and the futility of arguing with him 99.9% of the time.

"Fine. I'll go with Mike tomorrow night instead." El acquiesced. Hopper grinned and then turned to Will. "What about you? You in?"

"Sure, Hop," Will said as he concentrated on eating and finishing up his homework.

Hopper cleaned the rest of his plate and drained his orange juice before standing up. "Thanks for breakfast, Joyce." He leaned over to kiss her cheek. "Don't forget to mention the corn maze to Jonathan when he wakes up."

"Sure, Hop," she replied.

"Have a good day kids." They both murmured responses back while eating.

Hopper walked over to the front door, grabbed his hat off the hat rack on the wall, and walked out the front door.

Later that evening...

Hop swung his police truck into a space at the corn maze and turned off the engine. El and Will climbed out of the back seat and ran over to the huge bonfire lit off to the side.

Hopper watched as the kids grabbed marshmallows and a roasting stick. He then noticed Jonathan winding his way over to where El and Will stood. He must have arrived just before they did.

Seeing the kids together always made his heart feel lighter. He was rusty with the whole fatherhood gig, but they were good kids.

Joyce and his relationship sort of went from zero to sixty back in July. After the battle at Starcourt, Hopper and El were essentially homeless since the Mind Flayer had destroyed the roof on their cabin. When they went to Enzos for dinner, Joyce insisted El and him move out of the Motel 6 and in with her and her boys. She argued El needed a home where she could rest comfortably while she waited for her powers to return.

El's well being was his top priority, but his biggest concern was how her boys would feel. Not to mention he could be a little intense at times and they were just starting to figure out how they felt about each other.

Over the course of the dinner Joyce assured him she had already discussed it with her children and they were cool with the idea. For every reason he mentioned that they shouldn't, she had an equally good reason to counter. He finally relented over a piece of tiramisu and has never regretted it for a second.

"Hop," Joyce said, pulling him out of his musings. "Are you ready to test out this corn maze?"

Hopper smiled at her and started exiting the vehicle. "Let's do this!"

An hour and a half later, the Hopper-Byers clan exited the corn maze.

"Hop, I told you the exit was this way, but you kept taking us in the opposite direction," Joyce said frustratingly.

"Well I'm sorry, Joyce, that I don't have your stellar sense of direction in a field of tall corn stalks! It's not like there is some magical device that could tell me turn by turn directions!" Hopper said, voice rising in frustration.

"If you'd just listen to me once and awhile," Joyce started, but was interrupted by El.

"Mike!" El quickly took off in the direction of the bonfire. Will and Jonathan quickly followed.

Hopper looked in their intended direction and saw, not only Mike, but the whole monster squad...Lucas, Max, Dustin, Nancy, Steve, and

Robin. He sighed and said under his breath to himself "I thought this was family night?"

Joyce overheard him though and softly replied, "They are family, Hop." Feeling sheepish, Hop nodded and they headed over to the join the kids. Joyce was absolutely right. They were family.

He would never admit it to anyone, but he had a soft spot for all these kids. They had been through some horrifying situations together, but their continued faith in the goodness of the world...in each other...never wavered. They totally reminded him of those kids in that movie Will was telling him about over the summer, The Goonies. Granted the situations were a little different. The movie involved caves, a treasure map, and pirates, instead of the Upside Down, the Mind Flayer, and Soviets. But the bond both groups shared was strong.

As he looked around at each smiling face of his adopted family, he realized they had all managed to drag him out of the abyss he was previously living in. He was a better man for it. He had a good woman by his side, three kids he considered his, and an extended family that often drove him crazy. What more could a man ask for?

The End.